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12-8-2010

## Buffalo Public Schools Reconstruction

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## Buffalo Public Schools Reconstruction

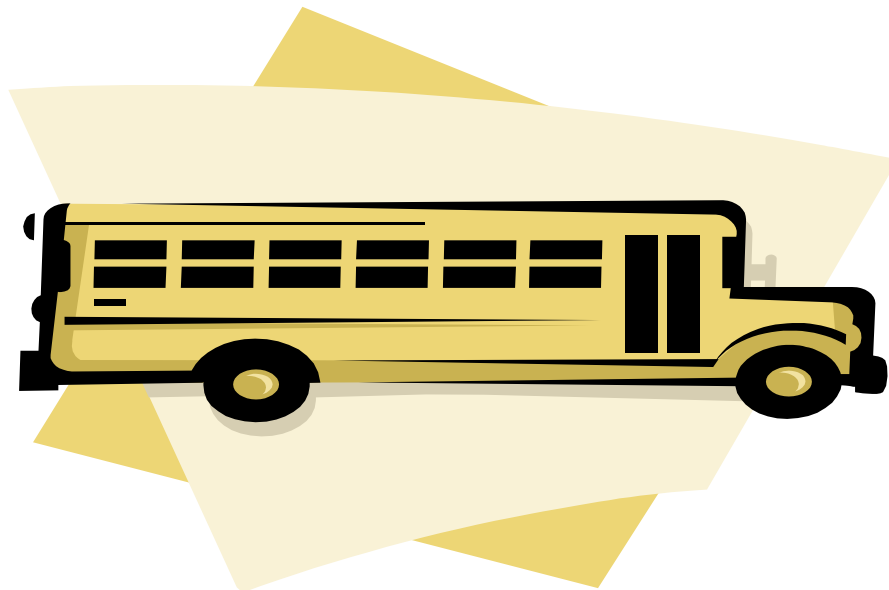
### Abstract

The Buffalo Public Schools Reconstruction is an ambitious 10-year reconstruction and renovation program. The project is designed to provide state-of-the-art learning environments, upgrade the public school infrastructure, and strengthen surrounding residential and commercial neighborhoods.

### Keywords

Buffalo, Education, K-12 Education, Fact Sheet, PPG, PDF

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### **What is the Buffalo Public Schools Reconstruction?**

The Buffalo Public Schools Reconstruction is an ambitious 10-year reconstruction and renovation program. The project is designed to provide state-of-the-art learning environments, upgrade the public school infrastructure, and strengthen surrounding residential and commercial neighborhoods.<sup>i</sup>



### **How many schools form the Buffalo Public Schools district?**

Buffalo has approximately 70 school buildings<sup>ii</sup>

### **How many children does the Buffalo Public Schools serve?**

BPS educates approximately 37,000 children. This number has been decreasing due to depopulation as well as the rising number of charter schools in Buffalo.<sup>iii</sup>

### **What explains the need to renovate the Buffalo Public Schools?**

BPS achievement has decreased due to decline in population and economic activity in Buffalo. An assessment of BPS found that:

- Buildings had an average age of 70 years without renovations.
- There was more focus on centralized control and compliance than on student performance and achievement.
- The system is marked by lack of direction and focus.
- The system is characterized by a lack of collaboration and communications.
- The system operates with antiquated procedures, technologies, and systems.
- The system is experiencing weakening community support.<sup>iv</sup>

### **Who oversees the Project?**

Created by state statute, the Joint Schools Construction Board (JSCB) is overseeing the project. The mayor and the superintendent serve as co-chairs. The other members are comprised of representatives from the City of Buffalo and the Buffalo Board of Education.<sup>v</sup>

### **How much is money is being spent on this project?**

Nearly 1.1 billion dollars is being spent on this project.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Where is the money coming from?**

93.7% of the money is being funded by the State of New York, with a small contribution from the BPS.<sup>vii</sup>

### What company manages the project?

LP Cimenelli Construction Companies was chosen as the program manager for the BPS reconstruction and renovation.<sup>viii</sup>



### How are the renovations being implemented?

The construction and renovations are being implemented in three phases.

#### Phase I:

In late September of 2004, Phase I construction commenced, involving the following schools:

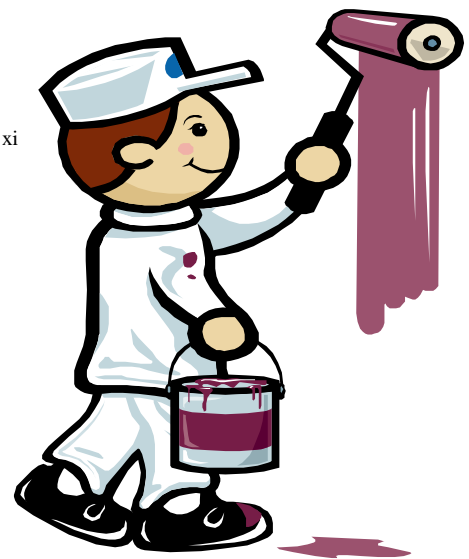
- PS #19 Native American Magnet School
- PS #31 Stanton Academy
- PS #38 Frank Sedita Community School
- PS #66 North Park Middle Academy
- PS #67 Discovery School
- PS #74 Hamlin Park Early Childhood Center & Academy
- PS #80 Highgate Heights Elementary School
- PS #302 Emerson Middle School and
- PS #307<sup>ix</sup>

Besides renovation in all the above schools, phase I includes a District-Wide Telecommunications Reconstruction Project. The goal is to provide telephone head-end equipment and telephones in the district. The new telephone system was installed in 88 schools and other district school support buildings. The new system also includes classroom data cabling for the new computer network.<sup>x</sup>

#### Phase II

Phase II has been completed, including the reconstruction of 13 schools, All High Stadium, and two district wide projects:<sup>xi</sup>

- PS #6 Buffalo Elementary School of Technology
- PS #33 Bilingual Center
- PS #37 Futures Academy
- PS #39 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Multicultural Institute



PS #69 Houghton  
 PS #82 Early Childhood Center  
 PS #90 Drew Science Early Childhood Center  
 PS #91 Build Academy  
 PS #94 West Hertel Academy  
 PS #95 Waterfront Elementary  
 PS #192 Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts  
 PS #200 Bennett High School  
 PS #304 Hutchinson Central Technical High School

The two district wide projects involve technology and energy performance. The District-Wide Technology Project provides high speed video content to classrooms thorough a video distribution system. The District-Wide Energy Performance includes numerous energy conservation improvements across 34 schools in Buffalo. The Energy Performance project is the only aspect of Phase II which has not been completely and will continue into Phase III.<sup>xii</sup>

### **Phase III**

Phase III is expected to be finished in the fall of 2009. It includes:

PS #27 Hillery Park Elementary  
 PS #32 Bennet Park Montessori  
 PS #43 Lovejoy Discovery School (name is subject to change)  
 PS #45 International School  
 PS #76 Herman Badillo Bilingual Academy  
 PS #195 City Honors School  
 PS #205 Riverside Institute of Technology (name is subject to change)  
 PS #206 South Park School  
 PS #301 Bergert High School<sup>xiii</sup>

Along with these reconstructions, there is a District-Wide Security project to install security cameras and card access systems in the schools. The Energy Performance project is still progressing in Phase III.

### **How is the community and economy of Buffalo benefiting from this Project?**

Cimenelli states that it has implemented a unique policy involving an established mandatory number of minority (MBE) and women (WBE) owned businesses and a diversity workforce inclusion agreement. Cimenelli has large and small contract plans that target and create opportunities for small businesses, minority owned, and women owned firms. The goal of Ciminelli is to increase opportunities for participation, increase competition, and decreases costs for these businesses.<sup>xiv</sup>

The goal for MBE participation is 25%. The goal for WBE is 7%.

In phase II, the MWBE goals were exceeded. The audited MBE participation was 26.79%. The audited WBE participation was 7.33%. The minority workforce participation was 22.19% and the women workforce participation was 7.25%.<sup>xv</sup>



In phase III, MWBE participation numbers fluctuate monthly and conclusive numbers will not be known until the project is complete.<sup>xvi</sup>

#### Construction Business Training Program

In July of 2006, JSCB and LP Cimenelli launched a construction business program to train start-up and small businesses. Thirty existing business owners and individuals attended a 5 month bi-weekly program led by a construction industry veteran and other business professionals.<sup>xvii</sup> The trainings are focused on:

- Construction contracts and basic construction law
- Establishing a new construction business
- Developing a business plan
- Business ethics
- Insurance and bonding
- Understanding project labor agreements
- Blueprint for financial record keeping in a construction business
- Financial planning and financial statements
- Safety and risk management
- Being and employer in the construction industry
- Marketing and business development
- Top ten reasons why contractors fail

#### **What are some problems associated with this project?**

This project currently costs \$1.1 billion and the number is rising. In the nation's current economic crisis, the flow of funds may be limited. In August of 2008, the New York State fiscal crisis almost stopped Phase III of the reconstruction when the state's Division

of Budget urged Governor David Patterson to veto a bill authorizing the work.<sup>xviii</sup> With lobbying efforts from Assemblyman Sam Hoyt and Mayor Byron Brown, the bill was passed and funding for the project continued. Besides complications with the budget and funding, there is an even bigger problem that will have significant impact on the Buffalo community. Urban planner and JCSB member Joy McDuffie states that the original intention behind this project was that there would be neighborhood development around the schools, but that this has not occurred. Eleven of the schools that will be renovated are in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. It makes little difference if children are going to nice schools when the buildings exist around bad communities. The neglect of community development will diminish the full impact that the project could have had for the economic growth of Buffalo.

### **Where can more information be found?**

Buffalo Public Schools Project Site at <http://www.lpciminelli.com/site/bps/>

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<sup>i</sup> Source: City of Buffalo website-

<http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/Leadership/Mayor/MayorsWelcomeMessage>

<sup>ii</sup> American Foundation, 7

<sup>iii</sup> American Foundation, 7

<sup>iv</sup> Reforming Buffalo Public Schools: <http://www.cgcs.org/pdfs/BuffaloPublicSchool.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> American Foundation, 6

<sup>vi</sup> Interview with urban planner and JCSB member, Joy McDuffie

<sup>vii</sup> Source: <http://www.lpciminelli.com/site/bps/>

<sup>viii</sup> <http://www.lpciminelli.com/site/bps/>

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.lpciminelli.com/site/bps/>- 2004 annual progress reports

<sup>x</sup> 2004 annual progress reports- BPS site home

<sup>xi</sup> 2006 annual progress reports

<sup>xii</sup> 2006 annual progress report

<sup>xiii</sup> Tyra, associate at Cimenelli LP- Company no longer submits annual progress reports on the website.

<sup>xiv</sup> 2005 annual progress report

<sup>xv</sup> 2005 annual progress report

<sup>xvi</sup> Cimenelli LP associate

<sup>xvii</sup> 2005 annual progress reports

<sup>xviii</sup> Simon, Peter. Buffalo school reconstruction project faces possible Paterson veto: State fiscal crisis may doom plans to refurbish 11 buildings. *The Buffalo News*. October 29, 2008